



Transfrontier Cooperation to Combat Wildlife Crime

German Cooperation with the Southern African Development Community



Context

The countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) share a long history of cross-border collaboration in biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development through Trans-frontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs). Such areas are contiguous eco-regions that straddle boundaries of two or more neighbouring countries and encompass one or more protected areas as well as multiple resource use areas. In total, there are 18 TFCAs in the SADC region, which not only play a central role in harbouring the continent's largest remaining wildlife populations, but also provide livelihoods for many rural communities living in and around the parks.

The recent rise in transnationally organised wildlife crime is a menace to the conservation of critically endangered species, but increasingly also threatens the livelihoods and security of local communities. In view of the transnational implications of the problem, SADC Member States and partners recognised the need for a joint regional approach to combat poaching and illegal wildlife trade as well as for appropriate cross-border arrangements between neighbouring countries, particularly with regard to TFCAs.

Our Approach

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) supports its partners in the SADC region

financially and technically. The financial cooperation helps to establish and manage selected TFCAs with investments in infrastructure, equipment, organisational development and participatory planning. A regional financing facility for TFCAs is under preparation. At the regional level the technical cooperation supports the SADC Secretariat and Member States in strengthening regional collaboration, e.g. through developing joint strategies. Furthermore, BMZ assists in fostering exchange and learning among governments and other stakeholders, based on lessons from piloting of cross-border solutions, such as joint ranger operations or tourism. The global Partnership against Poaching and Illegal Wildlife Trade complements this approach by bringing in new partners and support into the design and testing of specific solutions based on experience from other regions.

A Regional Framework for Concerted Action – the SADC LEAP Strategy

In 2015, the SADC Ministers for Environment and Natural Resources, in cooperation with the Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, adopted the SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching (LEAP) Strategy for 2016–2021. The Member States lauded the document developed with support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The SADC LEAP Strategy serves as a guiding instrument for Member States, defining the main strategic areas and actions to combat poaching and illegal wildlife trade in the region. It also outlines success factors and thus allows for its monitoring and evaluation. The major elements of the strategy are:



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1. The SADC LEAP strategy calls for better collaboration between all stakeholder groups. The picture shows government, NGO and donor representatives at a regional LEAP coordination meeting.
2. Anti-poaching team in the Mapubungwe National Park in South Africa and Zimbabwe

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1. Enhance legislation and judicial processes.
2. Enable cross-border collaborative intelligence operations and analysis of nationwide data on wildlife contraband trafficking
3. Integrate people and nature into conservation and development processes.
4. Ensure sustained trade in and use of natural resources.
5. Train scouts and rangers for field site operations, increase ranger patrols and introduce a ranger-based monitoring system.
6. Establish a SADC Wildlife Crime Prevention and Coordination Unit (WCPCU) to coordinate the enforcement of laws, and to detect and monitor trafficking, trading and harvesting of illegal wildlife resources.

Cross-Border Cooperation for Law Enforcement in the KAZA Region

The Kavango-Zambezi Area (KAZA) is the largest terrestrial Trans-frontier Conservation Area worldwide. With more than 500,000 m² its area corresponds approximately to the size of Spain or Kenya. It includes the Victoria Falls, the Chobe National Park and dozens of other protected areas and is home to some 220,000 African elephants, more than half of the African elephant population.

In line with the SADC LEAP Strategy, the five KAZA Member States adopted guidelines and rules for joint anti-poaching operations. In the past, ranger patrols would have to stop their pursuit of poachers when they crossed a national border. With the new standard operating guidelines in place, the teams can coordinate their actions faster and even cross over into another KAZA Member State while in pursuit of poachers. Through improved intelligence sharing, it is possible to warn law enforcement officials across KAZA countries of poaching activities, to identify poaching patterns and to plan enforcement proactively.

It is also possible to collect and share evidence to be used in the prosecution of wildlife criminals. As this requires compliance with different country-specific regulations, capacity development on crime scene investigation therefore includes improving the cooperation between the various competent authorities.

This guarantees the correct handling of forensic evidence to strengthen criminal cases to be sustained in courts.

Boosting Regional Ranger Training

Germany invests in the expansion and upgrading of training facilities and programmes, the Southern African Wildlife College being a key implementing partner. The programme will reach 4,000 field rangers and junior wildlife managers. Mobile, decentralised training units aim at widening the regional offer and will allow for on-the-job training.

Germany's Support for the Implementation of LEAP

Fighting wildlife crime cannot be done alone. Hence, German Development Cooperation works closely with SADC Member States and other international partners, such as the World Bank, the European Union, USAID, DFID and regional and international NGOs on a variety of activities:

- The development and promotion of the information sharing platform TWIX (Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange) in SADC in cooperation with the global Partnership against Poaching and Illegal Wildlife Trade and building on the experience made in some Western and Central African countries.
- Capacity building for rangers in TFCA through a regional ranger training programme, in collaboration with the Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC).
- The establishment of a cross-border radio system for improved coordination of anti-poaching units between Malawi and Zambia in the Kasungu-Lukuszi TFCA.
- The creation and support of local structures, such as cross-border fora and task groups that bring together the police, border control, military, district authorities and conservation groups.
- Development of regional standard operating procedures, training material and training for improved wildlife crime investigation, such as securing evidence from killed rhinos and elephants.

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